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Interview with Jane Gray Muskie by Don Nicoll

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Muskie, Jane Gray

Interviewer

Nicoll, Don

Date

May 3, 2000

Place

Bethesda, Maryland

ID Number

MOH 189

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Biographical Note

Jane (Gray) Muskie was born on February 12, 1927 to Myrtie (Jackson) and Millage Guy Gray. She grew up in the Waterville, Maine area, graduating from Waterville High School. Her father died when she was about 10 years old, so her mother supported the family. During the summers, Jane and her mother would travel to various resorts in Maine so her mother could cook. Jane's first job was dishwashing at one of these resorts. After graduation from high school, Jane worked in downtown Waterville at clothing stores. At the age of eighteen, she met Ed Muskie, a Waterville lawyer. They dated for three years before marrying in 1948. In 1986, she and Abigail McCarthy wrote a book entitled One Woman Lost, which focused on being married to politicians. At the time of the interview, she lived in Bethesda, Maryland. Jane passed away on December 25, 2004.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Gray family history; Jane's early employment; classmates in the Waterville, Maine schools: Bob Marden, Cyril Joly, John Jabar; Bob and Scoop Marden; Waterville community; working at a clothing store for Alvina Lewia; meeting Ed Muskie at an AmVets meeting; age difference between Jane and Ed; engagement; converting to Catholicism; Ed Muskie's religion; naming the Muskie children; Silver Mount house in Waterville; Ed

Muskie's back injury; Muskie's fundraising for the Waterville hospital; meeting with Frank Coffin after the injury to plan the Democratic Party; Marjorie Hutchinson; keeping the law practice open during the back injury; Ed's heart attack before Marjorie Hutchinson's funeral; OPS—Office of Price Stabilization; Muskie's "career plan"; 1954 campaign; Today Show appearance in 1954; Dick McMahon; and Dick Dubord.

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Transcript

Don Nicoll: It is Wednesday the 3rd day of May, the year 2000, and it's almost 2:30 in the afternoon. We are at 5217 Westbard in Bethesda, Maryland, the home of Jane Muskie, and Don Nicoll is interviewing Jane. Jane, would you give us your full name and your date of birth and

place of birth?

Jane Muskie: Jane Frances Gray Muskie, and I was born on February 12th, 1927.

DN: Who were your parents?

JM: Well, they both had very unusual names and whenever I see those names written down now, I stop and think of who else I've ever heard of who have the names, and I really have never heard of anybody who was named Millage, and M-I-L-L-A-G-E. And his name was Millage Guy Gray. My mother's name was equally a little strange to me and her name was Myrtie Jackson Gray.

DN: Now is that M-E-R-T-I-E?

JM: M-Y-R.

DN: M-Y-R-T-I-E.

JM: And she grew up in South Gardiner, Maine. But my father, when my father was born he was born in England, I wish I could remember the name of the town, but I don't at the moment. And he was brought over to this part of the world, the part of the world where he was really brought up was Prince Edward Island off the coast of Canada, and a lot of the Gray relatives still live in Canada.

DN: On Prince Edward Island or elsewhere in Canada?

JM: No, not, I don't know of anybody who lives on Prince Edward Island. When we were first married Ed kept mentioning every once in a while that he wanted to take me to see Prince Edward Island so I could see where my father grew up, and we sort of didn't get there very soon. But surprise, surprise, one time when we were up at Campobello, which you also know, he decided that the kids and he and I would keep on going up to Canada and see Prince Edward Island. It was really fascinating, it's like another world. And unfortunately I never did get to stop in any of the cities up there to visit any of the relatives. Number one because I didn't know really where they lived; we were not a close knit family in that respect, unfortunately. But I do remember meeting a couple of my aunts who came down to Maine every four or five years to visit. But I've always known that they lived up there near St. Johns, New Brunswick.

DN: So some of them moved into New Brunswick.

JM: Right.

DN: Now, the -

JM: Actually, Don, that was where my father was before he moved down to Maine. I think that was sort of a natural path for people who were coming into this country, according to him. I didn't really learn a lot about his background because my father was in bed all of my childhood,

and he unfortunately had one stroke after another, and then he died when I was ten.

DN: So you really didn't have much chance to know him.

JM: Well I did to a certain degree because my mother wanted to, I was the youngest child and the only one living at home and my mother wanted me to know my father. So I can remember even as a little kid, before going to school, of my mother putting me up on the side of his bed and I sat there and he talked to me and I just wish I had known enough to, you know, if I'd been able to write it down, which I wasn't able to, but I know at the time that I learned a lot from him. But, you know, I was so young that it kind of went right out of my head.

DN: Did, was he an adult when he came from New Brunswick to Maine?

JM: Oh, I think so because he had worked in a big mill up in New Brunswick and when he came down, at first he settled in Fairfield, which is just north of Waterville. And then he was able to get quite a good job with the Hollingsworth & Whitney Company, the paper mill that was across the river from Waterville in Winslow. And my mother was extremely happy, she told me, but unfortunately she wasn't, he wasn't able to continue the job. I really don't know how many years he was there, but I do know he was still there when my brother Jack went into the Army and that must have been in WW -, couldn't have been Two, I don't, no, I, actually -

DN: He died in '37 you said, when you were ten?

JM: Hm-hmm, and, well Jack was in the Aleutians the whole part of the war, so which war was that?

DN: That's WWII.

JM: It was. Well, I figured it couldn't have been WWI because he wasn't my age, but he, you know, he was still a young man when he joined the Army.

DN: Tell me about your siblings, then we'll come back to your father. You had two brothers and one sister?

JM: Two brothers and two sisters. Same, my mother told me when, well when I was a teenager, that, just joking, that I was going to have the same family that she had. And I, you know, I never thought of that until I had the fifth child. But -

DN: You had five. Now, was Howard the oldest?

JM: No, my sister Lee was the oldest. Actually, her name was Lerlene [(Gray) Powers], but everyone called her Lee, and she was the oldest and then Howard, and then Jack, and then Virginia and me.

DN: And how old was, when was Lerlene born?

JM: I don't know. I really don't. I couldn't tell you what year. But I remember that when she had her first child, her first child was born when I, I think it was the year that my father died when I was quite young, so. And her daughter Diana and I were always very close because we were practically the same age. Might have been a year's difference, but, and then she had one other daughter and one son. But she always lived in Connecticut and I really, even though they came to Maine, and my mother and I used to take the bus and go down to Hartford and visit them. But it wasn't, for my mother it was a very close relationship, but until my sister had children it really wasn't a very close relationship for me.

DN: And your older sister was pretty much away when you were in your teens, if her first child was born when you were ten about?

JM: Yeah, that's the problem with a family whose siblings are all scattered all over the country, and of course they weren't as much then.

DN: Was there a fair amount of years between the children?

JM: Her children?

DN: Yes, your mother's children.

JM: Oh, my mother's children.

DN: Or did (*unintelligible phrase*)?

JM: Well my sister Ginny [(Gray) Harvey], Virginia, is five or six years older than I am. And then Jack I think was like five or six years older than Ginny was, and my brother Howard I really don't remember. He was always sort of, since my father died at a relatively young age, Howard was the head of the family, so I really don't remember how much older he was, but probably five to six to seven years older than Jack.

DN: So the kids were spread out. And do you remember how your father and mother met?

JM: Well of course, not having been around, I really don't know how they met, but I know my mother had been raised most of her young years in, oh shoot, now I won't remember the name of the town in Pennsylvania. It was, I don't know whether it was a mining town. I remember when Ed and I were campaigning that we went to this town and I said to Ed how funny it was to be there since my mother had grown up there. And I had, you know, until she told me where she was brought up I never had heard of -

DN: But she was born in South Gardiner, you said.

JM: She was born in South Gardiner and then she was raised in, I think Waterville and part of the time in Winslow, on a farm. And then her mother died and her father married Rose Jackson and she was a widow with no children. And that's the point where my mother I think, I shouldn't say it this way, but she was kind of shipped off to another relative, who lived in

Pennsylvania, while his new wife was getting accustomed to a family.

DN: And then some time she moved back to the Waterville area.

JM: Right.

DN: But much of your young life was with your mother. Was she, did she have to work after your father died?

JM: Well, she did although she had never worked in her life. I guess women didn't then. But the only time that my mother really worked was when my father was ill and also after he died. We had a big house on what was called College Place on the then, not campus, but the then property of Colby College. And it, she, my mother was a very good cook and she and a couple of ladies who helped her, had college boys who came in and ate at our house. And they loved it because the food was good and probably cheap. I don't remember. But anyway, that was how, that was her first paying job I think. And then after my father died she went to work for a restaurant, it was up across from Keyes Fiber, and I've forgotten the name of that restaurant, but

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DN: It was The Pie Plate.

JM: Oh, it was The Pie Plate, good for you. And people seemed to, I think she more or less specialized in desserts. I think that's all she cooked were pies and cakes and stuff.

DN: I can tell you that Colby College students loved to go up there to eat the desserts.

JM: Oh good, oh I hope that's so. But anyway, she worked there for a number of years. The only problem that I had with that was when she got home to where she and I lived, she was tired of cooking so I sort of had to either fend for myself or try to cook, which I was never very good at until I was older. But anyway, those were her jobs that she had to earn money. My brothers, well Jack was still in the service, Howard was general manager of the Waterville *Morning Sentinel*. And I don't know what sort of salary he had but it was, he wasn't married fortunately for me because he was, when I needed a winter coat or something he was the one in the family who could buy it for me. So we certainly grew up in a, well it seemed like a normal family back then, but I've always thought that it was pretty remarkable that my mother, who had never worked, seemed to scrimp by on not much.

And I do remember, too, her, I had forgotten that she did earn money, I remember on Saturdays she would make doughnuts and people would, doctors, lawyers and all kinds of people in Waterville would come to the door to buy her doughnuts. But I think those were probably the only jobs. Except in the summer time. That was wonderful for me because she would take a pastry cook's job at a resort of sorts, you know, I don't know what you call the places. One summer we would go down on the coast to Southport and she would cook pastry down there, and another summer we would go to Rangeley Lakes and she would, she never took a job where she couldn't take me. And so I benefitted from it too until I was fourteen and she announced that I was old enough to earn some money myself. And I remember how awful it was to wash dishes

all summer. But anyway, it didn't kill me.

DN: So your first job -

JM: That was my first job.

DN: Where were you washing dishes?

JM: Well, it was a, I don't remember the name of the camp but it was some kind of a, something Lodge up in Rangeley. I had my first job and my first boyfriend all that summer, so.

DN: Was your mother there, too, or was this a -?

JM: Oh, my mother was there, yeah. Oh, my mother was, I shouldn't really call her strict but I certainly wasn't out of her sight very long.

DN: Had she been that way with Ginny, or less so with Ginny?

JM: Well, I don't think as much with Ginny because right out of school Ginny went to, in training to become a nurse, and she wasn't at home a lot. That was the first time I ever had a room of my own was when she was in nurse's training. The school was up at Sister's Hospital in Waterville, but they were sort of, she was not able to live at home, it was a nursing school where they lived in.

DN: Then, the subsequent summers during your high school years, did you also work as a dishwasher or did you find more interesting work?

JM: Oh no, no, I don't think I washed dishes too long. It wasn't my thing. But I think by then my mother was sort of winding down and not enjoying going, doing that sort of work any more. And I think, I remember by then my brother was married, and they had two children, and I think mostly the summers after that my mother and I either stayed with the children or We lived right in the center of town practically and we did go out to a little cottage on what was called Windemere Pond out in Unity. And that was the first time I think my mother had ever had a so-called vacation. But -

DN: What, you went to the Waterville schools?

JM: Oh yes, all the way through the Waterville schools. Still have friends who started in kindergarten with me.

DN: Oh, can you tell me some of their names?

JM: Well, Bob Marden was one, do you know Bob? Cyril Joly, Cyril was a little older but we did, we were always in the same school it seemed, and he also was a neighbor of ours, his family. And, now if I had been good and gone to all of the high school reunions I could tell you more people, but -

DN: Now, were any of the Mitchells in school with you?

JM: I think, George and I have discussed this a few times. I can't remember, they had such a large family, mostly boys, or a lot of boys anyway, and one of them was either one year ahead of me or one year behind me. I think it was Robbie, was Robbie the basketball player?

DN: Well they all played basketball, Paul and Robbie and Johnny all three were very, very good.

JM: Oh, and Johnny, yeah, Johnny Jabar, Johnny Jabar was in my class, and, let me think who else. Can't remember.

DN: Now, was Bob Marden's wife -?

JM: Scoop?

DN: Scoop, in your, in the same -

JM: Yeah, we're all the same age. Bob I think may be a month or two older than Scoop and me, but we were all in school together.

DN: What was Waterville like in those days?

JM: A very pleasant place to live. I don't know what it's like now. Unfortunately I don't go back as much as I'd like to. But everyone was always walking up and down the main street either to go and buy food or go to the drug store. But it was a very pleasant place to live. My mother never had to worry about me. I think of that now, especially after we moved to Washington and I heard what they called this, "murder capital of the world", but I never found it that way because we've always lived in the suburbs. But Waterville was really a wonderful place to live. I'd recommend it highly to people who want to move to a nice quiet, maybe it isn't anymore, I don't know, but it was when I lived there.

DN: And during those days did you have much interest in politics?

JM: Not really because I was always a little more liberal than my mother who was a rabid Republican. And I remember when Ed first ran for the legislature, and of course I didn't know him from a hole in the ground, but I said to my mother, "I see this guy at the Templeton when my boss takes me there for lunch and he's so nice. I really think you ought to vote for him." And my mother would say, "I'll see," or, she was really noncommittal. She never would tell me that she would vote for him or she wouldn't vote for him. But, and my brother Howard was Republican, so I always was very suspicious that those were probably a few of the votes that he didn't get.

DN: Was Ginny a Republican also, or was she -?

JM: I don't think so, I don't think Ginny was at all interested in politics until she married Jim Harvey and he was interested in politics. And then of course by that time it was sort of well known that Ed was going to become something, whether it was mayor of Waterville or something, but he was pretty active, so. And as you know, when he ran for mayor he lost by one or two votes; probably the best thing that ever happened to him.

DN: Now what about Jack, was he interested in politics and if so was he -?

JM: No, no Jack, after Jack came back from the Korean War wasn't it?

DN: He was in the Korean -

JM: I think it was the Korean War. He went to work for my brother Howard in the advertising department at the newspaper and he traveled a great deal. And I suppose going from town to town, his territory was sort of from Waterville up through Skowhegan and some of the smaller towns up in that county, but I suppose he might have been interested in local politics, but he certainly was never interested himself in running for anything.

DN: Now you mentioned your boss taking you to the Templeton. Who was your boss?

JM: Well my boss was Alvina Lewia who was -

DN: How do you spell her name?

JM: A-L-V-I-N-A, L-E-W-I-A, and she and her sister owned a very stylish, very nice shop in Waterville, and I was in training to become a person in merchandising. And I went to work for Alvina and did all kinds of things, selling, buying, paying people their weekly salary and jack of all trades. Ed used to laugh because he kept telling people that I was a model. I think I was, I think I was in two of her style shows, but anyway that didn't exactly describe me as a model. Anyway, it was a wonderful place to work.

DN: Did you go to work there after high school, or while you were in high school?

JM: Well, a little, it was the last, I think I had just graduated from high school and I got a job at Montgomery Ward's. And I remember because I didn't earn very much money working there, three dollars and ninety-four cents a week, but anyway it was the first time I had earned any money so it was, you know, quite nice for me as spending money. And I, while I was there Alvina came into the store probably toward the end of the summer and she asked me if I would be interested in going to work for her. Well everybody in Waterville wanted to work for her because she had beautiful clothes. And then her sister who owned the other half of the business had beautiful hats, handmade hats. And she hired a young girl, and Alvina hired me, and we were that combination for quite a few years until . . . Well actually Alvina used to take me to the Templeton for lunch so that I could meet Ed. That wasn't my desire, that was her desire, and -

DN: Oh! Now this would have been when? You went to work for her in 1945.

JM: Right. And, let me see, I can't even remember what year we were married. Nineteen forty-eight? Yeah, I think we were married in '48, so, but I really didn't have my heart set on capturing him. And until the girl who worked for, Alvina's partner's name was, what was her name, Florette Hebert, and she was wonderful for the shop because she could speak French. And I didn't know anything except, I think I took two years of French in high school, but it wasn't the kind of French that they talked. So anyway, but she was a wonderful girl and, young lady.

Anyway, she and I were good friends. And one night her mother, who had been in the WACS or the WAVES or some part of the Army, her mother came to see Florette in the shop and she asked Florette if I would like to go with them to a meeting of AmVets. And I really did not have a big interest in the AmVets I didn't even know what it was., but Florette convinced me to go with her. And lo and behold we sat in the front row, and who was the commander but Ed Muskie. So I just sort of had a feeling that maybe I was going to meet him even though it wasn't at the Templeton. And at the end of the meeting he said, I think he was the only one there who had a car, and he said to the group, which was very small, "We're all going over to the Templeton to dance," or something. Anyway, "If anybody would like to come in my car," well we thought that was great because nobody had a car.

Anyway, we rode over with him to the Templeton and I did meet him and he was very tactful, but he drove everyone home first and I was the last one left in the car. And I thought, "Whoa, what's going on here." And he asked me, he invited me to go to the first Ball that they were holding in Augusta after he was elected to the, as representative. And I can't remember, they called, they had about every month or something like that, it was on a regular pattern, and he invited me to go with him. And of course when I went to work the next day and told Alvina she was really, I think she thought she had succeeded and she was pretty pleased. And she went down to Boston immediately to buy me a wardrobe of evening clothes. So you see, I had chosen the right person to work for.

DN: Now at that time Ed's law office was just a couple of doors away and upstairs wasn't it?

JM: Well, more than a couple of doors, Don, but it wasn't far down the street. And it was kind of fun for me because Alvina would dress me up in her minks and Beau Martin furs and all that stuff, and send me down to the bank to deposit the money every day, and I was the first one in Waterville to have long dresses when they became fashionable. And she didn't have children so, you know, she was making up for it by being nice to me. And -

DN: So this would have been early '47? Ed was elected in '46 and the Balls were the following winter.

JM: Hmm, I suppose.

DN: And so -

JM: Well, actually I met Ed when I was eighteen. We weren't married until I was twenty-one. He certainly would not have married anyone who couldn't vote, so.

DN: Was that a condition?

JM: Well, no but I mean I think he was very worried that people would think that he was robbing the cradle, or, so anyway.

DN: So you met, well you actually met him then in 1945, you would have been eighteen in -

JM: But I had already graduated from high school. And it had to have been -

DN: But you started going out some time after you met him first?

JM: Oh yeah. Actually when I met him I was, not often, but I was going out with a young man who was at, was going to school in New York at Columbia Medical School. And I remember my mother saying, "Well for heaven sakes don't marry him, doctors are terrible, they're never home." And then, of course, I went ahead and married a politician who also was never home.

DN: Did you think of him when you first met him and were dating him after that AmVets meeting that he was going to make a career of politics?

JM: I probably didn't think of that, but my brothers both did. And they were all in Lion's Club together and my brother Howard said to Ed one time, he didn't tell me this for a couple of years, but he kept saying, "You're too old for my little sister," and that sort of thing. But anyway, my mother loved him, because he was tall and he could change light bulbs and he always was willing to do anything around the house. And so she really liked him a lot but my brothers were not, you know, they liked him in Lion's Club but they just didn't -

DN: They didn't want to let him out of the Lion's den.

JM: I guess that was right.

DN: Or put you in it.

JM: Right.

DN: What led you to decide that he was a good person to marry?

JM: Well, mostly because he was very understanding. Even though my mother liked him a lot, I don't think she would have trusted any, you know, I was still young and she wouldn't have trusted anybody, but. And also, you know, Ed had a little bit of a temper, and, just a little one. And he wanted me to go down to his cottage every weekend and of course that was, I could have told him right off that that was not going to happen. And my mother would, you know, when I would tell him that my mother would not allow me to go down he really was a bit upset.

But then he began inviting his parents [Stephen and Josephine Muskie] to come to the cottage

because he knew how to, I shouldn't say manipulate but it was sort of that, he knew that my mother would probably agree as long as his parents were there. And she did, she was okay about it if his family was there. And I had a great time. I'd go down and his father would be asleep out on the porch in the rocking chair and I'd paint his father's toenails bright red. Oh, I don't know, I had a wonderful time with his family. But -

DN: What were they like, his father and mother.

JM: His family?

DN: Yeah, his father and mother and his sister and his brother.

JM: Well, I really loved them a lot because they were very different from my family. It wasn't that my family was better or anything like that, it's just that they were different, and Mrs. Muskie was really very nice to me. She used to tell me what a shy boy he was and how he'd sit in the corner and play with his toys while the rest of the kids were running around outdoors and so forth. And she, I think he was sort of maybe a bit spoiled by his mother. But I liked the fact that he got along well with his mother and with my mother. And besides that I was very inexperienced and, you know, I wasn't really thinking about marriage until maybe a year or so later, a year or two later. But . . .

And then one time when I flew down to Hartford, Connecticut to see my sister, who said that she needed to talk to me, my sister Lee, who was really old enough to be my mother, and I sort of had the impression that she wanted to talk to me about going out with this older man. And so, and we did talk and she gave me her opinions, and I took them for what they were worth, and flew back and landed in Boston.

And I was going to take the bus back to Waterville because it was cheaper, and Ed met me at the airport and we went to the home of Howie Buzzell, who was a friend of both Ed's and friend to me also. And we stayed there overnight and that was, we didn't share a bedroom or anything like that, that wasn't done back in those days. But anyway he did, I was sitting on the sofa and he came out and everybody sort of had disappeared. I don't know whether he had talked to them before I got there or what, but anyway he asked me if, you know, and in his, in his funny way, he said, "I think maybe it's time that we decided whether we wanted to get married or not." Which was kind of surprise to me.

And but, when I, when we got back to Waterville, my mother said she wasn't surprised at all, so she evidently could see the handwriting on the wall, which I couldn't. But anyway, after we talked it over with, he talked it over with his family, I talked it over with my family and my mother said, "Well you're certainly not getting married right off. All of my friends in town will be gossiping," or something. So we decided to get married in May, in, yeah in May, and we were, we were married May 29th.

DN: I'm going to pause here.

End of Side A

Side B

DN: This is the second side of the first tape in a series of interviews with Jane Muskie. It's May 3rd, the year 2000. Jane, you were just talking about the actual date of your wedding, where were you married?

JM: We were married in the Catholic church in Waterville, Maine. I was not a Catholic at the time, I was a First Baptist, but I took instructions and became a Catholic, because I simply felt that we most likely would have a family and that life would be a lot simpler if we were of the same faith; and I've never been sorry.

DN: Now, was Ed very strong in his convictions as a Catholic?

JM: Well, I think he was a good Catholic. I don't know, I wouldn't exactly call him a pillar of the church, but I'm sure that when he lived at home in Rumford that they probably all went, the parents saw to it that everyone was at church every Sunday. And, but then on the other hand, I had the same situation in my house because my father, even though he had died when I was young, my father was an Episcopalian and my mother always was a very strong First Baptist and a pillar of the church, of the Baptist church in Waterville. She did a lot of good things for them and helped in the way women did in those days.

And she also was a person who was a little different for her times, as I think back on it, because she would say to me, "Now if you'd like to go to the synagogue with Loretta Goldberg this weekend, you can do that instead of going to church with me." And I thought, you know, later years, I thought, "My goodness, she was really way ahead of her time." But she did that always, all my life, she'd say religion is so good, but it doesn't mean that it has to be one particular religion. And that was the way she brought us kids up. And it's funny because four out of the five children that she had turned Catholic, and I think that did hurt for a while, but I hate to say this because, but we all turned out okay. So I think that helped in the long run, but I think it did bother her for a while because she was used to going to church with my father when he was alive, even though it was a different branch of religion than the one she preferred. But anyway I've always been very happy in the Catholic faith, and so have my brothers and sisters.

DN: Now I asked you about Ed and his feelings. It appears from what you've said that he felt more strongly about remaining in the Catholic Church than you did remaining a Baptist. And I was struck as a staff member years later when we were on the road, and particularly I remember in 1969 being in London with him for a, he had a speaking event in England, and on Sunday morning we had a free morning and the first thing we had to do was to get up and go to Mass.

JM: You had to go out first and find a church, didn't you?

DN: Yes, and that was, that was not an occasion when anybody else knew he was going to Mass, but it was important to him.

JM: Well I think it really, right up until the end, it always was important to him. You know, we weren't, we never carried it to any great lengths but we always talked to the kids and said,

you know, "If for no other reason, it's going to make you feel better." And our kids, some of them go to church more often than other ones, but basically they, for one thing we lived right around the corner from the church and the church school, which they all attended, grammar school. And they always have said that they not only had a good education, but they also had a good sense of feeling that it was important to carry on the faith of the family.

DN: Did you have any discussions with Ed's father and mother about what your family might be like, that is how you and he would be living and where?

JM: Well, I can't say that I ever did because I had not a clue as to where we would be living. Certainly a person who had been elected to the house of representatives, even though it was in Augusta, one never moved to Augusta. And I couldn't imagine ever leaving Waterville anyway. We had bought our first house, when we were first married we lived in an apartment. And after Steve was born, Steve was born, I don't know whether you know this or not, but we named Steve for his grandfather who unfortunately had had a very severe heart attack and had no grandchild named for him. So even though I had asked Ed if I, if, in the hospital I could name the baby for him, he said, "No," he didn't want the baby named for him. However, I persevered and the last one is, as you know, but anyway -

DN: And he, meaning Ed, reluctantly agreed that you were right on the last one.

JM: Did he?

DN: I always felt he was very proud of the fact that he had a son named for him.

JM: Well, I'll tell you, Don, I'm not sure you're right because I talked him into that sort of because I said, he said, "I don't want anyone to call him Eddie" or, he said, "I hated it when people called me Eddie, and I don't want a kid of mine called Eddie." And I said, "Well, he won't because we're going to call him Ned." And he said, "Ned, what kind of a name is that?" And I said, "Well, I had an uncle from Canada who moved down here eventually but he was, his name was Edward, but we always called him Uncle Ned." So that was how I convinced him that Ned was a real name. And I don't think anybody had ever called our Ned anything but Ned.

DN: Well the, you lived in an apartment first after you were married.

JM: We did.

DN: And then you bought, how long did you live there?

JM: Oh, about a year and a half. And then we bought a little Cape Cod house on -

DN: Silver Mount?

JM: Silver Mount Street in Waterville, right near our friends, the Mardens lived down the street. And my sister-in-law and brother Jack lived right across the street from us. We were very happy in that little house. We were there for two or three years. And eventually moved

into a larger house, thirty-two room Blaine House in Augusta when Ed was elected governor.

DN: Now it was while you were living at Silver Mount that Ed was doing some work in the upstairs and had his terrible accident.

JM: It was a terrible accident. The stairway going up to the second floor curved around, you know, there was like a landing and then it curved around. This being a house that was called a so-called “do-it-yourselfer” or something. After the war people furnished, not furnished but finished the second floor of these houses themselves, or as they could afford to do it. And Ed had been to the library and taken out all kinds of books on how to put down, how to lay floors and how to build in cabinets for towels and. . . . He had decided he was going to do the upstairs himself except for the bathroom, which I think he wasn’t allowed to do. I think you had to have a real plumber or something.

Anyway, he had been working up there. By that time Steve was maybe, not a year old but he was a little boy, and Ed had gone out and bought Steve a little work box with a hammer and tools. And Ellen was just born, they were only eighteen months apart, and while I was putting the baby, Ellen, to bed, Ed would take Steve upstairs to the second floor with him, which meant that he had to put up some kind of a barrier so that he wouldn’t fall down the stairs or fall down the stairwell. And he did, he put that up. But, and Steve was fine, but Ed forgot that he had put that up for Steve and he sat back on the railing after he had He had called me upstairs and said, “Is this how you want the linen closet?” And I said, “Yes.” And he sat back on the rail to, the railing to admire his handiwork, and down he went through the stairwell and landed on his back on the bottom step.

And I was panicked, I was sure he was dead, and I called Dr. Chasse who was our doctor, and screamed something to him. And he said, “Pour some whiskey down his throat.” Well, we didn’t drink and, well he wasn’t breathing so I’m sure he wanted me to do something until he could get there, he only lived a few blocks down. And anyway, I said, “We don’t have any.” I can’t remember what he asked me to pour down his throat but it was some kind of alcohol. And I said we didn’t have it but we had something else. I can’t remember what that was either but it was some, something we’d probably had for a christening or something. Anyway, I almost killed him by pouring this stuff down his throat. And by that time fortunately Dr. Chasse arrived and, with an ambulance close behind, and off we went to the Sister’s Hospital with my mother staying with the babies.

And it seemed like, I can’t, I think Ed was in the hospital something like two months and a half or something. But the nuns, the Sisters of Charity at the Sister’s Hospital, where incidentally [*sic*] Ned, Ed was the chairman of a fund raising drive that the hospital was having, because they were going to have to close down if they didn’t acquire some funds to stay open. They were really having a hard time. And Ed had started the drive to save the hospital and they had, the people that he had convinced to help him went door-to-door and all they asked for was a dollar from each family. And I can’t remember what the amount was that they raised, but they raised enough money to save the hospital. And it was ironic that he ended up in that hospital with all of the nuns with their big wide wings outside kneeling on the floor, for it seemed like months to me; it probably wasn’t. But I was there all of the time, fortunate as I was to have my mother

with the babies. But anyway, he almost jumped out of the window one day from some kind of terrible medication that they had given them. But anyway he didn't, a doctor walked in at the right moment.

But he did start to recover about in March or April and he came home shortly after and was dying of boredom after a month, and we decided to move down to China Lake. And I thought that would be good for him because he could swim, you know, and perhaps mend his back. And that was the way it worked. And he did swim a lot. It was hard on me because I had one baby on one hip and the other baby on the other hip, but, because I always wanted to keep my eyes on him to make sure he wasn't drowning or something.

Anyway, we stayed there for months and months, and that was when Frank Coffin came down and visited fairly frequently. And he was trying to convince Ed to run for governor, and Ed was trying to convince Frank to be the state chairman. And the summer went by rapidly that way, because it had suddenly become very interesting to me and very interesting to Ed, and anyway between the two of them they practically formed the Democratic Party. And in the fall, I guess it was in the fall, was it in the fall that they started campaigning? Maybe not that early.

DN: They didn't, no, they didn't really start until the next spring.

JM: The next spring, that's right.

DN: But they were talking during that period. This must have been a tough financial time among other things.

JM: It was a very tough financial time, and fortunately, or unfortunately first of all, neither Ed nor I was, or my brothers were smart enough to tell me that I should be on, should be able to go to the bank and withdraw money and so forth. Evidently wives didn't do that in those days. And I had no money, but my brother Howard supported us through all of this crisis and we were just lucky to have family. And we managed. It took us a long time to pay him back, but, because of course Ed didn't work for quite a while, a year or so.

DN: Now did his law secretary keep the office going?

JM: She did, and you knew Marjorie [Hutchinson]. And Marjorie was a very capable and inventive kind of person and she decided that she would start a little collection business, and she did that when we were having hard times. She and her father, I think, helped too. And he was, what was he, Don? He was a -

DN: I never knew Marjorie's father, (*unintelligible phrase*).

JM: Oh, well Marjorie's father, I don't know what you call He wasn't, he didn't have a state job but he, he was the kind of a person who, if you had committed a crime he was the one who was sent to your door, and I don't think he could arrest anyone.

DN: He was a summons server?

JM: Something like that.

DN: Probably with the county and the sheriff's department.

JM: Yeah. And even he helped out, he helped Marjorie keep that office going, and I can't remember all the stories that, you know, all of this time with, Ed's mind wanted to be working every minute and he would tell me all these stories about the first murder case that he tried and how Marjorie's father had told him a few tricks of the trade and so forth. And it was all very interesting, but anyway, she was certainly a wonderful and capable person to -

DN: Describe Marjorie for us, those of us who don't know her.

JM: Well Marjorie was tall, blonde, beautiful inside and outside person who lived in a big close knit family. Natives of Waterville. And she had a happy home. And unfortunately her husband died too young so that she wasn't able to stay with us all the time in Washington, but she was able to run Ed's office not only in Waterville, but when he became governor. And she did a terrific job. And when we moved to Washington when Ed was elected to the Senate, she did come down to Washington and supervise the people who were hired and the, maybe not all of the people but, you know, the secretaries like, wonderful people like Gayle Cory and Joanne Hoffmann. She was just a big, big asset always, to Ed.

And it's ironic, really, that after her husband died it was only, well I don't remember how many years it was before she passed away. [sic] But we were, Joanne and Ed and I were flying up on the plane from Washington to Augusta I guess to attend Marjorie's funeral and Ed had a heart attack on the plane.

No, he didn't have a heart attack on the plane, he had a heart attack in the night when we were at our house in Kennebunk. And he was more worried about Marjorie's funeral than he was about his heart attack. And Joanne and I were at the hospital all of the time and about five o'clock in the morning he said to me, "I don't care how you get there, but I want you to go to Marjorie's funeral." Well, I wasn't too sure that we weren't going to have a funeral of our own, unaccustomed as I am to heart attacks, but anyway he really made it clear that it was very important to him. And all of the time that we were at the funeral, Joanne and I kept looking for George Mitchell, who was in touch with the hospital every five minutes or so, to know whether I should leave and go back to the hospital or stay, or what to do. And things went better than I thought they were going to and we were there amongst friends and a huge turnout, because she was a very popular person. And that was certainly the end of an era.

DN: Marjorie had come to work for him early in his law practice?

JM: I couldn't tell you the year because it was before my time. And she was there when I first went up to Ed's office to take Alvina's, Alvina being my boss and a very clever woman, made sure that I was sent to his office to deliver her income tax or something that he was going to do for her. Anyway, Marjorie was already there, so I have no idea how many years but it was a long, long association.

DN: When you and Ed were married, he was in the legislature and practicing law in Waterville.

JM: And not earning very much money.

DN: It was a small practice.

JM: Well, it was. I remember asking him how much he was taking in per week, and, not because I was money hungry but just out of curiosity. I had no idea how much lawyers, you know, even just the word lawyer represented somebody who certainly made more money than anybody in my family ever did, but that wasn't the case. I remember his telling me that he was going to do better, but he was only clearing about fourteen dollars a week, so I'd better be careful. And he really never did make a lot of money practicing law. But anyway, it was enough to be able to feed those two little kids that we had then.

And then of course, when we moved to Augusta it was like, I really didn't want to leave Waterville to move to Augusta in the first place, but I knew that we had to. And the first thing that I noticed was how lucky I was because there, staring me in the face when we walked into the Blaine House, were ten people who were going to wait on us for the next four years. And not ever having had a cleaning lady or anybody it certainly was a different kind of life. But it was a very nice part of our lives, too.

DN: Now Ed in 1950 I believe it was, took over as director of the Office of Price Stabilization in Maine.

JM: Oh, I hated that.

DN: You did hate that, why?

JM: I hated that, because he was in Portland all week and I was there in our little house scared to death that somebody was going to break in, take my babies. And the only blessing was the fact that Jack and Doris lived right across the street. But it wasn't a very happy time, because there were a few people in the Office of Price Stabilization that Ed knew and could go out to dinner with and so forth, but he didn't like, well for one thing he didn't like the travel. You know, going to Portland in those days was a major -

DN: Did he stay there all week?

JM: Hm-hmm, stayed all week. If he ever came home on a Thursday night I thought it was wonderful, but that didn't happen very often and I really didn't, I really didn't like that too much. Sort of interfered with normal living.

DN: Now during this period both, after he left the OPS he ran for national committee man, and then you were talking about his conversations with Frank Coffin about the Democratic Party.

JM: Right.

DN: Did you get a sense that Ed had in mind a political career, and running for higher office? Was he eager to do that? Did he have a career plan?

JM: You mean like the Senate or something like that?

DN: Yeah.

JM: No, I didn't even think about that. I always thought that it would be wonderful if he just happened somewhere along the line to be chosen as a judge or, that was what I saw as a future for him because he was always so honest and thoughtful of people. And, I just sort of thought he would turn out to be a judge and I thought that would be a great life, but it didn't work out that way.

DN: Did he in those days ever talk about the possibility of being a judge?

JM: No, no.

DN: Did he talk about -?

JM: He never talked about going, being a governor. It was always other people who thought that he had the qualifications, or. . . . I don't really think that, he wasn't really a person who dwelled on the fact that he was smart or had any qualifications for any of these high jobs or high places in government. I don't think anyway. Maybe inwardly, maybe he thought about it but he never, he certainly never talked about it.

DN: But in 1953 he and Frank were talking and he was recuperating at China Lake and after he, you indicated that he was excited about working on developing the party.

JM: Oh, he thought that was, I think that was probably his most ambitious time in his life. He, that was something that he could see happening, and even though we had had one Democrat who was governor of Maine in I don't know how many years, but a long time. I think he really was quite turned on by the prospect of really actually working hard at some kind of a political project. And certainly the fact that he admired Frank so much and knew that he had the qualifications to run a Democratic Party if there ever was to be one, and I think even though it turned out that Ed became governor, even if he hadn't won that race they certainly would have been a good team to get the Democratic Party on its feet, don't you think?

DN: I think that's true.

JM: Yeah.

DN: And that certainly was the plan in '54 when nobody expected to win. What was that campaign like for you?

JM: Well, it was interesting since I really didn't know anything about campaigns. And when

Paul Fullam was also running for the Senate, Ed and Paul were gone all day and never were gone all night because they didn't have enough money between the two of them to rent a room. But anyway, Mrs. Fullam and I, Agatha Fullam and I would go sometimes during the evening to meet them in places when my mother was able to take care of the children or if, and Mrs. Fullam also had children. So, but we did both of us try to go often and she didn't know any more about it than I did. And it was a nice experience. And it's funny, too, because you know, I didn't even dare believe my own feelings. I could see that people liked it when Ed spoke and yet, you know, I couldn't believe that they were all going to vote for him, all these people who seemed to like him. But actually, as a matter of fact I was scared to death that they would vote for him. And, but it was fun.

DN: What scared you about that?

JM: Oh well, it would have, you know, the fact that it would change our lives. And I don't know, it was just, by then of course my, both of my brothers thought it was wonderful. They were willing to drive to the most northern parts of Maine and even on election night one of my brothers brought a whole case of beer and the other one brought a whole case of whiskey, and things that we never had around so that people could celebrate. I had no idea that they thought he was going to win, you know, it was very unlikely. And I went home to my mother's house and made sandwiches. And I'd make a batch of sandwiches and then I'd go in the bathroom and throw up. Yeah, I was so nervous. But -

DN: This was on election night.

JM: Election night in Waterville. But anyway, it certainly was a new and different experience for me and for Ed. But it changed in a hurry. We got back to our little house about four o'clock in the morning after he won, and there we were in our pajamas, and all of a sudden the *New York Times* was at the back door and lots of other press people. You can imagine how different that was.

DN: What happened a few days after the election? Did you make a trip?

JM: Oh, we did. Are you referring to New York?

DN: Yes.

JM: Yeah. Yeah, what was the name of the program that we were on that was so popular then?

DN: *The Today Show*.

JM: Oh, of course it was *The Today Show*, how could I -

DN: With Dave Garroway.

JM: Yeah, it was, it was Dave Garroway, and he was very nice to us.

DN: And how did you get to New York?

JM: Well, we flew on a plane that was bumpy all the way down.

DN: Provided by Jean Gannett Williams at the time.

JM: My heavens, that's right, I'd forgotten. I should never forget her, because she became very nice to us when in fact she had of course been the publisher and editor of the Portland newspapers and sort of on the other side of the tracks. But it's funny about when you win, your friends come out of all kinds of strange places. But, of course, by then too my brother was a vice president of the Gannett chain, too, so it was beneficial to my family all the way around.

DN: What, do you remember any incidents in connection with that trip to New York? What it was like for you and for Ed to be on a national television show?

JM: Well, I really don't remember. Somebody had a tape of that and I listened to it long after, but I really don't remember that very clearly.

DN: I'd like to just go back briefly to the 1954 campaign and some of the people involved in that campaign, and most particularly Dick McMahon, who was Ed's campaign manager. Tell us about Dick and the relationship between him and Ed and between him and you.

JM: Well, it wasn't hard to love him. He was such a good friend to Ed. And he helped out in so many ways and we never realized how much of a sacrifice it was, because his wife was home alone sick when he probably should have been there, and he was off with Ed every morning early. But anyway, he was a wonderful friend and I think probably Dick McMahon and Charlie Lander were the two people that Ed was attached to, sort of right from the beginning. They were both so good to him.

DN: What was Dick's role in Waterville?

JM: Well, his primary role was driving the car. And I don't remember whether he drove his own car or our car, but anyway they got off really early, that's what I remember; made for a long, long day. And then when they would come in at, eight o'clock was early, but even if they came in at ten or eleven, usually they hadn't eaten. You know, they'd run out of money and they might have had forty cents between them or something so they had had a doughnut and a cup of coffee. Usually I tried to have something available in case they were still hungry, and they usually were. But, you know, they had to unwind and they'd sit down and talk about the day. And had Ed picked up any votes in such and such a town, and was he able to see the mayor or did anybody offer to help. And I imagine Dick McMahon didn't get home very early any night.

DN: Another person from that era who one got the impression was important to Ed was Dick Dubord.

JM: Oh yes, he was. He was very important.

DN: And what was his role?

JM: Well, I think Dick was more of a, maybe a speech writer, or he was able to, you know, his family had always been political and I think from his father he had learned probably more than Ed knew about politics at the time. And I think he sort of was not only a wonderful companion, but he was also very knowledgeable about how things should work and I think he was more able to attract other people of his stature to the campaign. Don't you? Yeah, I think he was. Of course it was his father [F. Harold Dubord], bless his soul, who convinced Ed finally to run. So I don't, I don't know whether that was for good or for bad but it certainly turned out to be good.

DN: Well, we're at the end of this tape.

JM: Good.

DN: And we'll come back and pick up the story in 1954 on the next interview. Thank you very much.

End of Interview